



Environmental Health Activities in Vermont



NCEH in Partnership with Vermont

The National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). NCEH's work focuses on three program areas: identifying environmental hazards, measuring exposure to environmental chemicals, and preventing health effects that result from environmental hazards. NCEH has approximately 450 employees and a budget for 2004 of approximately \$189 million; its mission is to promote health and quality of life by preventing or controlling diseases and deaths that result from interactions between people and their environment.

NCEH and partners in **Vermont** collaborate on a variety of environmental health projects throughout the state. In **fiscal years 2000–2004**, NCEH awarded more than **\$2.8 million** in direct funds and services to Vermont for various projects. These projects include activities related to addressing asthma, helping state public health laboratories respond to chemical terrorism, and preventing childhood lead poisoning. In addition, Vermont benefits from national-level prevention and response activities conducted by NCEH or NCEH-funded partners.

Identifying Environmental Hazards

NCEH identifies, investigates, and tracks environmental hazards and their effects on people's health. Following is an example of such activities that NCEH conducted or supported in **Vermont**.

- **Addressing Asthma from a Public Health Perspective**—NCEH is funding the **Vermont Department of Health** to develop asthma-control plans that include disease tracking, science-based interventions, and statewide partnerships to reduce the burden of asthma in the home, school, and occupational environments. NCEH is also funding Vermont to implement its statewide comprehensive asthma control plan. Funding began in fiscal year 2000 and ends in fiscal year 2006.

Measuring Exposure to Environmental Chemicals

NCEH measures environmental chemicals in people to determine how to protect people and improve their health.

Following are examples of such activities that NCEH conducted or supported in **Vermont**.

Funding

- **Antiterrorism Funding to Increase State Chemical Laboratory Capacity**—In fiscal year 2004, CDC provided more than \$1.1 million to **Vermont** to help expand chemical laboratory capacity to prepare for and respond to chemical-terrorism incidents and other chemical emergencies. This expansion will allow full participation of chemical-terrorism response laboratories in the Laboratory Response Network.

Services

- **Helping State Public Health Laboratories Respond to Chemical Terrorism**—NCEH is working with **Vermont's** public health laboratory to prepare state laboratory scientists to measure chemical-terrorism agents or their metabolites in people's blood or urine. NCEH is transferring analytic methods for measuring chemical-terrorism agents (including cyanide-based compounds and other chemicals) to Vermont. In addition, NCEH instituted a proficiency-testing program to measure the comparability of the state's analytic results with results from the NCEH laboratory.
- **Newborn Screening Quality Assurance Program**—NCEH provides proficiency-testing services and dried-blood-spot, quality-control materials to monitor and help assure the quality of screening program operations for newborns in **Vermont**. The importance of accurate screening tests for genetic metabolic diseases cannot be

*In fiscal years
2000–2004, NCEH
awarded more than
\$2.8 million in direct
funds and services
to Vermont.*

overestimated. Testing of blood spots collected from newborns is mandated by law in almost every state to promote early intervention that can prevent mental retardation, severe illness, and premature death.

Preventing Health Effects That Result from Environmental Hazards

NCEH promotes safe environmental public health practices to minimize exposure to environmental hazards and prevent adverse health effects. Following are examples of such activities that NCEH conducted or supported in **Vermont**.

■ Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

Program—The Vermont Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (VT CLPPP)

has received NCEH funding since 1993. In 2001, the program screened 6,455 children for lead poisoning. The number of children under 6 years of age who had elevated blood lead levels decreased from 306 in 1997 to 144 in 2001. These decreases in blood lead levels are due to state program efforts funded in part by NCEH.

VT CLPPP is using NCEH funds to develop and implement a childhood lead poisoning elimination plan, targeted screening plan, and case management plan, to maintain and enhance its statewide surveillance system. VT CLPPP also is using NCEH funds to increase primary prevention activities and strategic partnerships.

laboratory sciences as applied to environmental health, radiation studies, safe disposal of chemical weapons, specific health studies, vessel sanitation, and veterans' health.

Resources

NCEH develops materials that public health professionals, medical-care providers, emergency responders, decision makers, and the public can use to identify and track environmental hazards that threaten human health and to prevent or mitigate exposure to those hazards. NCEH's resources cover a range of environmental public health issues. These issues include air pollution and respiratory health (e.g., asthma, carbon monoxide poisoning, and mold exposures), biomonitoring to determine whether selected chemicals in the environment get into people and to what degree, childhood lead poisoning, emergency preparedness for and response to chemicals and radiation, environmental health services, environmental public health tracking, international emergency and refugee health,

For more information about NCEH programs, activities, and publications as well as other resources, contact the NCEH Health Line toll-free at 1-888-232-6789, e-mail NCEHinfo@cdc.gov, or visit the NCEH Web site at www.cdc.gov/nceh.